Interview

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After interviewing a specialist in the field of Criminal Forensics I learned several things that will benefit me as I work toward my major. Criminal forensics involves writing but not necessarily in a creative way. Many parts of the profession involve strict documentation.

I interviewed a retired member of the Pennsylvania State Police. He was a member of the Forensic Investigation Unit or FSU. I started the interview by asking him what sort of writing he usually did while he was working. He told me that the majority of writing was filling out reports. These reports ranged from daily activity reports to crime scene observations and even search warrants. The average report that he filled out was a pre-printed paper with check boxes and room to write a short narrative about whatever he was reporting.

When asked why he writes these reports he told me that they would be used in the criminal process. Investigators use these reports to help with an investigation. He told me that the reports could go through the hands of many different investigators and even end up in cold case files. His reports are sent directly to his supervisor where they are corrected for mistakes. Then the supervisor sends the report to the officer in charge of the investigation. The officer in charge then decides the importance of the report and either files it or sends it to the district attorney to later be used in court. After the case is closed sometimes the public is given limited access to the reports.

I then asked him if he read any important articles relating to his job. His response was that he regularly reads the "Pennsylvania Bulletin". The "Pennsylvania Bulletin" is a monthly article that reports changes and rulings in court cases. This article helps investigators and FSU teams learn what kinds of practices work and what kind don't work when investigating a crime.

The last thing that I asked him was what he gets out of his writing. He told me that the writing he does is not very technical or creative. The writing is detailed and to the point with short sentences and direct quotes from people. The goal of writing reports is to convict a guilty party. If he can do that successfully he told me that then he is satisfied.

Thanks to this interview I learned a lot about what kind of writing is involved in Criminal Forensic field. I learned that being direct and to the point is very important for investigators when filling out reports. I also learned that reading up on current criminal proceedings is very important if you want to write reports that can successfully get a conviction.